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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines considerations exploring the potential contribution of philosophic positions to the study of educational administration under three broad areas. The first is the ideas and methods of educational administration. Arguing that a variety of perspectives and approaches is needed, the paper discusses general philosophic theories and the current confusion between realists and positivists in educational administration. The second area of discussion deals with communication and verification within the field. There is a need for developing standards of communication and verification that insist on clear exposition of ideas and explicit communication of procedures and results. This is particularly important since multiple perspectives and ideas are the norm. A discussion follows on specific philosophic approaches, qualitative inquiry, phenomenological analysis, and dialectical materialism. The third area of discussion treats values and the normative side of educational administration. A conception of values is espoused that would provide a broad vision of human beings and schools at their best and speak realistically to the problem of concrete moral choice. In the final section, the ways in which philosophies are intertwined and reflect each thinker are discussed. In conclusion, the need for using a philosophical approach that is open to a wide range of ideas and methods is restated. (MD)

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PHILOSOPHY AND THE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

by

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Philosophy is a human creation. Even though philosophic thought transcends particular individuals and subsists as part of the on-going history of ideas, that history of ideas is also a human creation. This line of thinking leads to an interesting question. It asks how philosophy as a human creation can serve particular human endeavors.

Asked in connection with educational administration, this question leads to an exploration of the potential contributions of philosophic positions to the advancement of educational administration as a field of study and ultimately as a domain of practice. In what follows, some criteria are sketched for a philosophy that could nourish advancement in educational administration. They are discussed within three broad areas. The first has to do with the ideas and methods of educational administration, the second deals with communication and verification within the field, and the third treats values and the normative side of educational administration.

First, however, some caveats. A philosophy that can potentially help to advance a field of study is not thereby truer or better than other philosophies. A crucial consideration is the meaning given to advancement. If the values inherent in the particular conception of advancement are reasonable and good, then the philosophy that promotes such advancement is likely to be worthy as well. As the analysis proceeds, I will do my best to make explicit my conception of what constitutes advancement in educational administration and the criteria for a philosophy that can serve an advancing field. A number of philosophical issues relevant to educational administration also will be explored. While the analysis will be framed within each of the three broad areas previously noted, the parts are interrelated and form a relatively consistent whole.

Ideas and Methods

The ideas and methods that are brought to bear on the problems of educational administration provide the field's intellectual content or subject matter. It appears that advancement in educational administration as a field of study will be better served when there is a variety of ideas and methods available than when there are fewer. Many perspectives and approaches will provide an enlarged subject matter and likely a more interesting one. Commitments to the one true theory or to a single best method of research are naive. They are relics of an older social science and were not seriously entertained in educational administration even when theory was first widely embraced in the field. Occasional references to grand theory in the 1950s and early 1960s were to highly abstract as opposed to less abstract middle range-type theories, not to a single sovereign theory.[1] More to the point, the self critical feature of inquiry underscores the futility of long term commitments to a particular scientific theory or method.

In any case, the criterion for an appropriate philosophy that emerges is straightforward. The philosophy should encourage and be able to accomodate a variety of ideas, theories, and methods. This rules out philosophies given to absolutes, transcendent ideas, or final truths. It rules out philosophies that present themselves as finished systems of thought rather than as open and growing ones. More to the point in terms of the contemporary scene, an appropriate philosophy would not be burdened with a heavy predetermined ideological content. Views steeped in a fixed ideology often exhibit a "them versus us" mentality, a tendency to divide the world into two starkly different camps, the one full of error, if not evil, and the other anointed with truth.

Looking to a few more or less modern philosophies, this first criterion would not pose insurmountable problems for an analytic philosophy, some types of existentialism,

phenomenology that emphasized phenomenological methods,[2] and various forms of naturalism, empiricism, pragmatism, and instrumentalism.

On the other hand, narrow versions of positivism would not be appropriate because they paint as meaningless many concepts that have useful intellectual content, and thereby limit inquiry. The later Husserl's transcendental phenomenological idealism and other forms of transcendentalism would be unsuitable as well. A possible exception would be a view that relegated its transcendentalism to one part of a dualistic system and let the other part have freer reign. Dialectical materialism and the Marxian and neo-Marxian thought that goes with it also fails to meet the criterion. In this case, the positions espoused are so heavily laden with pregiven ideology that other views are, in effect, foreclosed without a serious hearing.

These general philosophies are mentioned primarily as anchor points. They also represent positions that seem to satisfy or fail to satisfy the first criterion suggested for a philosophy that could serve advancement in educational administration. However, there is a trend in contemporary philosophy away from schools of thought, or what some call isms, towards a concern with the treatment of particular philosophic problems. Such a trend can go only so far because it is useful to categorize and compare perspectives in terms of the history of ideas. Still, the trend is consistent with our first criterion and it is a reminder that one need not adopt a complete philosophy in order to speak to a particular problem. Even though I refer to an appropriate philosophy for educational administration, I want to state explicitly that I am not arguing for a traditional ism. I am simply recognizing the value of having philosophical positions that are consistent across a series of issues.

The Current Scene: Rhetoric and Reality

Presently in educational administration, a wide range of perspectives and

approaches is being employed. Despite this, one continues to find references in the literature to unnamed legions who are bent on imposing a single perspective and method. These references take several forms. A popular one juxtaposes a naive realism with another position, often a version of idealism.[3] The argument usually goes like this. The realist position that there is a world independent of mind is presented. It is taken to be a view in which "facts" are also independent of mind. Science then becomes the process of uncovering these facts which are somehow out there waiting to be discovered. Once they are discovered they are good forever. Moreover, the only true method of discovery is experimental. Realist metaphysics are thus connected to what is labeled positivism, which is supposed to be a proper title for the odd conception of science just given.[4] This conception is the one allegedly being imposed.

Of course, the argument is seriously flawed. Its purpose in the first place appears to be to set up an easy target. In any event, realists are not necessarily given to the view of science described and positivists are not necessarily realists.[5] In fact, the logical empiricists[6] stressed the relationship of observation and theory rather than "reality" and theory. Both the logical empiricists and the later analytic philosophers were deeply concerned about the problems of meaning and language, so observation and communication were important facets of their work. They did seek to insure explicit meaning through their emphasis on operational definitions, but their aim was precise scientific expression and reporting, not final definition.

The confusions about realists and positivists are only part of the problem. The depiction given of science is a straw man if there ever was one. The interplay of the observer's ideas with what is observed is and has long been recognized as a salient feature of scientific activitiy. Indeed, the framing of observations through theories devised by clever individuals lies at the very core of the scientific enterprise.

Science, like philosophy, is a human creation.[7] To argue that there is a dominant view of science that has no place for the contribution of the puzzling, thinking scientist, is absurd. So also is the picture of the scientist pulling back a curtain of mystery to reveal facts good for all time. That picture contrasts sharply with the portrayal of the scientist thinking up tentative explanations from observations and speculations, and testing them with further observations. Such individuals do not pull back curtains, they try out patterns, always with the intention of finding better ones. The notion of final truth is a complete perversion of the commonly accepted conception of scientific conclusions as provisional, always subject to revision, abandonment, or replacement.

Why would a strange mixture of exaggerations and errors featuring metaphysical realism and unrecognizable positivism be presented as a serious view, much less one said to be widespread or even dominant? One can speculate. Obviously, straw men are made to beat and a caricature of science in the form of scientism at its worst is an easy mark. An additional and more important possibility, one that seems likely given the current scene in the social sciences and educational administration, is that the stage is being set to argue on behalf of what advocates see as a radical departure from current thinking. Obviously, these advocates would benefit if they could convince others, as they have themselves, that current thought is monolithic as well as incorrect, and that their own viewpoint should win out in what they see as a two-choice world. More on this later. For now, it is clear that there is more rhetoric than reality in such arguments.

To return to an earlier point, debates on realist versus idealist metaphysics are not very helpful anyway. Philosophically, the question of an independent world cannot be directly resolved because the world is apprehended only through minds.[8] While evidence from fields like geology, astronomy, and biology suggests that there is such an independent world, a philosophic doubt remains. However, the issue of

a world independent of mind is not a critical one for philosophy of science. An issue that is critical is whether the world that is observed exhibits any order. That it does is both an assumption on which investigative activity rests and a judgment sustained by the history of inquiry and its applications.

Of course, the order and patterns that give meaning to our observations are, in a sense, imposed. People create conceptual patterns that help to make sense of phenomena. Doing so is a key activity in inquiry. However, of crucial concern is the matter of the confidence that one can place in particular efforts along these lines, the topic considered next.

Communication and Verification

It has been argued that advancement in educational administration will be served by receptivity to a variety of ideas and methods, and that a philosophy that would promote such advancement must be open and growing. The notion that scientism dominates and shuts out alternative views was shown to be far-fetched. To the contrary, the prevailing spirit of inquiry is one that values thoughtful explanation, novel ideas, and insightful hypotheses and speculation. This sort of hunch-getting, imaginative, idea generating activity represents the creative side of inquiry. There is also a critical side that features criticism, skepticism, and the process of verification.[9] The blending of the creative and critical provides a kind of scientific ideal in which one conceives and lovingly sculpts ideas or theories and then earnestly strives to falsify them.[10] Admittedly such an ideal often will not be attained, and some will not try at all. For instance, it is hard to imagine a Marxist scholar seeking to disprove Marxian theory.

Ideologues aside, any discussion of verification in the social sciences should begin with explicit recognition of the enormous difficulties involved. They need not be

reiterated here. We all know about the complexity of human behavior in social settings and about the problems of representativeness and generalization, among others, as well as about the pitfalls that stem from ever present human bias and ideology. These are all part of the human condition. They come with the territory. That is why work in educational administration and the social sciences so often falls short of ideal standards of inquiry.[11] It is also a good reason why, as a matter of course, we should all be skeptics and critics of particular efforts in our field, including our own.

Previously, the position was taken that advancement in educational administration would be served by multiple ideas and methods. Is this an endorsement of Feyerabend's anything goes principle?[12] In one sense it is. Educational administration can only benefit from a climate consistent with what was called the prevailing spirit of inquiry, that is, openness to all sorts of possibilities. Yet, we also know that every idea and method has its weaknesses and limitations as well as its strengths. We know that some make more sense and are more useful than others.

Advancement in educational administration will be served by standards of communication and verification that insist on the clear exposition of ideas and the explicit communication of procedures and results. These standards are meant to be consistent with the call for multiple perspectives and approaches made earlier. Clear exposition can be asked of any attempt to use language to communicate, whether we are talking about theory, complex or simple explanations, ordinary reasoning, interpretation, speculations, or efforts to express values, feelings, or attitudes. The explicit communication of procedures and results can be asked of any method whether it be phenomenological, dialectical, experimental, survey, participant or non-participant observation, ethnographic, or case study. No perspective or approach is automatically ruled out, but the requirements of explication discourage relativism.

The criterion for an appropriate philosophy that emerges here is simply that it should espouse the kind of standards recommended. These standards emphasize communication more than they do verification, but they are slanted towards verification that features procedures that are explicit and public. A philosophy that is vague on epistemology, or an extreme subjectivism, or transcendentalisms of the sort that have trouble with methodological explication would have difficulty meeting such a criterion, but it is not otherwise very restrictive. A Deweyan theory of knowledge in which truth is defined as warranted assertibility[13] fits it quite well. What warrants an assertion on this view is, of course, public evidence. Although I find such a theory of knowledge eminently reasonable, others would not be unsuitable, for instance, that associated with a descriptive and methodologically oriented phenomenology.

The Current Scene: What Did He Say? What Did He Do?

Standards that demand clear exposition and the explicit communication of procedures and results are all the more important when multiple perspectives and approaches are common, as they are in educational administration and the social sciences. Different theories and methods feature their own ways of seeing and their own ways of using language. Thus, communication across perspectives and approaches is often limited and when it does occur, it is often distorted.

Some material is easy to follow and understand, some is not. Traditional modes fare quite well. A study based on the statistical treatment of data taken from instruments completed by a sample of respondents is relatively easy to follow and to assess. A theory presented in a formalized deductive mode is an exemplar of clear exposition. Of course, we might find the study methodologically flawed or just plain trivial and we might find the theory logically fallacious or wrong-headed. However, we will at least know what was done in the one instance and what the argument was in

the other. This also enables us to evaluate the work in terms of criteria that pertain to that particular mode of activity. In the case of the survey research, for instance, the reliability and validity of the instruments and the representativeness of the sample, among other things, would be important. In the case of the theory, its consistency, scope, and fruitfulness as well as its heuristic and predictive qualities could eventually be examined.

Those who employ other perspectives and approaches may be devoted to other kinds of criteria. For instance, the researcher doing an observational study might be more interested in describing a striking example than a representative one. Perhaps the example captures and illustrates an aspect of social life that the researcher believes is important. The subjectivist might want to present data that would give readers an empathetic sense of the personal feelings of individuals in the particular setting under study and not be especially concerned about the technical reliability of the results.

Given the desirability of variety in educational administration, it makes sense to examine various ideas and methods in their own terms. That is, in the cases just given, to ask how well the striking example illustrated the aspect of social life it was intended to illustrate and whether the sense of personal feeling was actually conveyed. The same kinds of questions can be asked of more abstract endeavors. For instance, is a particular effort at phenomenological analysis adequate in phenomenological terms?

There are, however, problems in confronting some intellectual activities in their own terms. For one thing, the scholars engaged in such activities might not be clear on whether they believe special criteria apply to what they are doing, and if so, what they are. For another, the reports of these scholars might lack the clear exposition and explicit communication of procedures and results necessary for others to

determine whether criteria peculiar to the activity (let alone other criteria) were satisfied.

Without clear exposition and explicit presentation, scholarly communication cannot take place, or if it does, it is greatly limited. Some years ago, in the comic strips, a particular adversary of the Detective Dick Tracy was appropriately nicknamed "Mumbles." His speech was unintelligible except to one apparently sharp eared individual who acted as Mumbles' translator. Each time Mumbles spoke, a third person would ask, "What did he say?" Mumbles' side-kick and translator would then repeat what Mumbles had said.

In inquiry, the question asked about Mumbles, "What did he say?" is primary. It is essential to know what someone has said, what their theory or argument or interpretation is. In terms of procedures, a question Detective Tracy surely asked about Mumbles, "What did he do?" is primary. It is essential for other scholars to know what the researcher did.

As studies are actually conducted, the activities that these questions suggest are closely intertwined. A positive legacy of logical empiricism that speaks directly to that intertwining is the operational definition. What is being suggested here is the importance of the operational definition as a question asking how a particular concept was actually used. Operational definitions are often used implicitly and perhaps even unknowingly in observational studies. If a researcher writes about social norms, or loyalty, or conflict in such a study, one can ask what the referents were for these concepts. The issue is whether the observations were really coherent with the concepts, or put another way, whether the operational definitions consciously or unconsciously used by the researcher fit the prose definitions of these concepts. In any event, operational definitions are something scholars of every persuasion use whether they are aware of it or not. The famous example from Gilbert Ryle that

Geertz used to criticize operationalism illustrates the point. Geertz argued that simply to describe an eye wink is operationalism and thin description, but to describe a wink made in parody to deceive an innocent into thinking a conspiracy is underway is thick description.[14] The point is that Geertz employed an implicit operational definition of parody and it is this definition that is crucial to the observation.

Qualitative researchers need to be especially alert to the importance of clear exposition and the explicit communication of procedures and results. However, this does not mean that such work must meet specific standards that would apply to more experimentally-oriented efforts. It has already been stated that perspectives and approaches should be first assessed in their own terms, but it has also been suggested that some authors do not bother to indicate the terms under which they offer their work.

Those doing observational studies should indicate what they are trying to achieve and design the work accordingly. If they wish to draw conclusions from evidence, they should employ suitable procedures of the kinds that have been catalogued by writers who desire to make such work more rigorous.[15] If they seek hypotheses or if their aim is to familiarize others with conditions in one setting, then their nets can be cast more loosely.

Qualitative inquiry is especially well suited to the latter aims, but some advocates see comments on the hypothesis generating strengths of such inquiry as a reproach that implicitly denies its hypothesis testing capabilities. For instance, one claimed that I limited qualitative research to the role of furnishing illustrations of what life is like to particular people in school settings, and that I reserved explanation for higher order research.[16] Actually, I have argued that generalization can be legitimately achieved in observational studies,[17] and have advocated observational studies in educational administration for almost 25 years, even during the time when

my fellow advocate still saw general systems theory as the path to follow in educational administration.[18]

As a consolation to the sensitive, it might be pointed out that generalization and conclusion drawing are risky in all science, but especially in the social sciences. Even quite rigorous studies have limitations in this regard. Indeed, it is difficult to conclude very much from a single study, which is why so much attention has been properly given of late to meta-analysis.[19]

My personal preference is toward a less structured, hypothesis-oriented mode in qualitative investigations. Nor should such work be limited to observational field studies. I have contended elsewhere that diaries, logs, oral or written accounts of experience, films, photographs, novels, and a restudy of classic works in social science could add to our understanding of educational administration. In some cases, solid hypotheses or even tentative conclusions might be derived from such sources; in other cases, an empathetic sense of administration might be the outcome. Surely, both are desirable. Subjectivists and phenomenologically-oriented scholars can make an important contribution by doing work on aspects of individual experience that enhance empathy.[20] If such scholars were as clear and explicit about what they are doing as are some more traditional ones, confusion could be avoided, and their work would receive the serious attention it deserves. Hence, the importance of our rather simple standards concerning explication.

Studies of single cases ordinarily do not provide strongly warranted generalizations, but this should not be taken to mean that they are somehow second class. Hypothesis generation, in my judgment, is the most creative and most interesting stage of inquiry, and empathy is an important quality in human communion and in ethical decision making. Ultimately of course, a theory of knowledge that can be brought to bear in assessing ideas and methods is essential. Such an epistemology

should, I believe, stress skepticism and public procedures of verification. However, a place is needed for insights that might be more personal and less public.[21] That these insights may not be the same thing as general knowledge is not really relevant. That we have a clear idea of what they are and how they were gotten is, however, crucial to the whole enterprise.

Next, two rather abstract approaches are considered. Both often leave even thoughtful persons wondering just what they involve.[22] I have discussed them elsewhere,[23] so the treatment here will be brief. The two are phenomenological method and dialectical analysis.

Phenomenological method, as set forth by Husserl, should be distinguished from general subjectivistic approaches in the social sciences. Some of these approaches might be called phenomenologically-oriented, but they commonly ignore the phenomenological method that is central to the philosophy.[24] That method is based on the suspension of all past judgments which are put aside or bracketed. Bracketing leaves the pure consciousness or experience of a given individual focused on the object of analysis. This object can be real or fictional, but essences are the traditional subject matter of phenomenological analysis.[25]

Phenomenological analysis has been attempted in the social sciences. The work of Alfred Vierkandt and Max Scheler can be cited as early efforts.[26] I have argued that stale criticisms of "positivism" in educational administration do not do justice to phenomenology and that advocates of phenomenology should make serious attempts to apply its method. Vandenberg has recently made such an attempt.[27]

His brief essay, which he described as incomplete, probed for the essence of the school as an educational institution by attending to ordinary experience. The effort was not self-consciously methodological despite the literature on phenomenological analysis. Vandenberg's piece can be described as a reflection on schooling. If the

"What did he do?" question is asked, the answer appears to be that the author reflected on the essential characteristics of "schooling that the educational administrator should strive to bring into being,"[28] and then organized his reflections in written form. It is not clear whether Vandenberg attempted to set aside presuppositions of his own or others, or whether he ended up with a view that fitted his own preferences. It is also not clear if other phenomenological analysis of the same topic would yield similar or different results.

Vandenberg used the term hermeneutical phenomenology in the title of his article. Does the adjective imply something special? Hermeneutics, or the science of interpretation, used to be invoked primarily in examination of context, comparison, and juxtaposition with other sources, especially in scriptural analysis. The term is now used more broadly, particularly by phenomenologists, to refer to interpretation in its broadest sense. One even hears words like the hermeneutic imagination although the reviewer of one book with that title wrote, "What exactly is the hermeneutic imagination? . . . I must confess I remain unenlightened."[29]

It appears that in a phenomenological context, hermeneutics implies a commitment to broad reflective interpretation. It might also signal a turn toward more artistic modes. For instance, Rorty emphasized what he called the edifying qualities of hermeneutics rather than its epistemological ones.[30] Hermeneutics used in this sense suggests a relaxation in the more disciplined side of phenomenological method.

Dialectical analysis is based upon Hegel's philosophy of history and the familiar thesis-antithesis-synthesis format. Marxism is the source of most contemporary dialectical analysis, although such analysis need not be Marxian. Classical Marxism was well suited to dialectical analysis because of its peculiar emphasis on historical necessity. It was Marx himself who saw history unfolding conveniently within the

Hegelian scheme, but with a materialistic twist. The ruling classes were to be overthrown by the working classes resulting in a dictatorship of the proletariat and ultimately a classless society.[31] Eventually, neo-Marxists began to deemphasize this awkward aspect of their intellectual legacy and with it the application to history of Hegel's theory. Dialectical analysis became a label for a variety of formulations and arguments made within a Marxian perspective. Sometimes dialectical principles such as the law of strife, interpenetration, and unity of opposites were invoked, but more often concepts like contradiction or domination and emancipation were brought to bear on the problem at hand. Benson's effort explicitly to apply Marxian dialectical analysis to organizations is a useful illustration.[32] It is an application to a delimited area and it makes a substantial effort to justify itself as dialectical analysis. Nevertheless, the method is claimed by orthodox Marxists and neo-Marxist critical theorists alike and its use in most cases boils down to the presentation of arguments within a Marxian framework.[33] The fairly common use of terms like dialectical thought also suggests this broader approach.[34]

Phenomenological method, including its hermeneutic side, and dialectical analysis are both approaches that are based upon reflection and argument, each with its special perspective and sphere. It appears that in contemporary usage each is being employed in a somewhat looser fashion than previously. Seeing these approaches in this light helps to demystify them, and the importance of clear exposition and explicit communication is again underscored.

If those conditions are met, then more substantive assessment is made possible. When a line of argument is clear, it can be evaluated in terms of its logic and reasonableness. When procedures and results are explicitly given, the adequacy of the procedures and the evidence for the results can be appraised. However, unless these simple standards of clear communication prevail in the first place in educational

administration, multiple perspectives might result in a Tower of Babel that could fragment the field and retard its advancement. Still, the criterion that an appropriate philosophy should espouse such standards leaves the door open to a variety of philosophical positions. Those that prize clarity and reject obscurantism could serve advancement in educational administration.

Beyond the matter of advancement in educational administration, philosophies provide ways of confronting larger issues. Thus, once a perspective or approach being applied in educational administration is understood in its own terms, it remains to be determined whether those terms are reasonable and what they imply from an epistemological point of view. Some philosophies make more sense and are sounder in epistemology than others. My preference is for an epistemology that links general knowledge to public procedures of verification, but also recognizes the significance of personal, concrete, and empathetic experience. By setting a criterion that is epistemologically incomplete, I am simply acknowledging that a philosophy espousing an epistemological position other than the one I prefer could advance educational administration.

Values

Values should be a key concern in educational administration. While the distinction between the normative "ought" and the descriptive "is" has been useful from the standpoint of linguistic clarity, the normative and descriptive are thoroughly intermixed in everyday life.[35] Hence, the practice of educational administration is an arena in which values and perceptions of reality come together. Practitioners must frequently choose among competing values and institute courses of action that they hope will achieve desirable aims. Educational administrators are also concerned with values in another way. Since schools tend to reflect their societies or communities and are socializing agencies for the young, the administrators of these organizations

commonly act as spokesmen for the more general shared values of the larger community.[36] Moreover, schools can, in the right circumstances, contribute to change and the improvement of their communities and societies.

A conception of values that would abet advancement in educational administration should have two main characteristics. First, it should furnish broad visions of what human beings and schools might become at their best. Second, it should speak realistically to the problem of concrete moral choice that is such a salient feature of administrative life.

Broad visions of the desirable can serve as ideals and ends-in-view that reflect human experience and a humane wisdom. Here I have in mind such ideals as personal freedom for everyone including the freedom to criticize existing social and political arrangements, the right of all persons to cultivate their individual capabilities and to grow, and respect for the dignity of each and every human being. Such ideals are very general but they are important in a symbolic sense. They give expression to widely shared desires that can inform and inspire more concrete beliefs and actions. They also serve to remind us of how imperfect the world is and how great the gap is between such visions and current realities.

Educational administrators work in the particular worlds of educational organizations and their immediate concerns are with their schools and those who are affected by these organizations. Still, the broad visions just articulated can have meaning in the everyday life of schools. They suggest educational aims like the mastery of relevant subject matter, the development of critical thinking and reflective decision making, and the cultivation of civility and compassion for others. Visions and ideals can inspire, confer a sense of direction, and even motivate action. They are necessary, but by themselves they are not sufficient for a conception of values that would further advancement in educational administration. Whether we are

talking about schools or nations, solutions to the ethical issues of modern times require more than vision and more even than good intentions.

The reason for this is the complex contexts of moral choices and the difficulties of implementing those choices. Genuine moral choice occurs in the context of competing goods, or quite often, the lesser of two evils. When a desirable outcome is easy to attain or when the decision is between a clear good and a clear evil, serious deliberation is not required. The intermixture of the normative and descriptive means that a critical dimension of ethical judgment lies in the estimation of an alternative's consequences. Is it likely that the alternative in question can be successfully implemented? What are the chances that the attempt to implement it will fail and leave the involved individuals and organization worse off than before? What are the potential side effects and unintended consequences of the course of action, and can they be dealt with or headed off as part of the overall implementation effort? Such questions indicate how moral choice requires the mediation of deliberation that draws upon a variety of perspectives in its exploration of the likely outcomes of courses of action.[37]

The kind of complexities and questions just considered are at the heart of valuation in educational administration. This is what was meant when it was stated that a conception of values for educational administration should speak realistically to the problem of concrete moral choice. Recall that this and the ability to furnish broad visions of what human beings and schools might become at their best were taken as the main characteristics of a values perspective that would abet advancement in educational administration. These considerations imply a criterion for a philosophy appropriate for educational administration: that philosophy should present both a vision of ideal human and organizational conditions and a method for confronting moral choices.

Transcendentalisms, once again, do not fare very well because philosophies with absolute ethical standards tend to provide simplistic solutions to complex problems. One could continue through the gamut of ethical positions from Plato's Idea of the Good through Kant's categorical imperative to utilitarianism and beyond, but I will leave it to others to demonstrate how particular ethical positions that they might favor can advance educational administration.

In order to do justice to the requirement for a method to deal with complex moral problems, I believe that a philosophy that locates moral choice squarely in concrete contexts is necessary. Effective moral choice requires reflective attention to empirical possibilities. Visions of what is right are essential and can compel substantial agreement, especially if they are quite general, but the main problem lies in negotiating the mazes created by the intracacies of modern social life. Here, political and social philosophy, as well as ethical philosophy, have special relevance, but so do empirically based interpretations of the probable consequences of courses of action. To cite just one example, virtually everyone would agree that both liberty and equity are desirable. Both concepts can inspire and motivate, but the important question is how to enhance them in particular group, organizational, and societal settings, especially when there is potential conflict between them.

In any event, it is well to keep in mind that attempts to make wise moral choices will simply not work out much of the time. An appropriate moral philosophy can strengthen educational administration, but as with all ideas and theories, applications are uncertain; there are no panaceas and no guarantees.

Confronting Some Contenders

Our analysis suggests that a number of philosophies and philosophical positions could contribute to advancement in educational administration in the three areas

considered. It might also be noted that philosophies are sometimes intertwined in ways that might at first seem anomalous. To give some examples, Marxist dialectical materialism has genuine roots in Hegelian metaphysics if not in Hegelian idealism; "Husserl frequently spoke of James, whose Principles of Psychology was of lasting value for him,"[38] and James, who perhaps more than anyone else can be identified as a pragmatist, has been called the first phenomenological psychologist;[39] and there are some interesting similarities between phenomenological method and analytic philosophy which is a kind of latter day positivism. One could go on, but it would be a mistake to minimize the genuine differences that exist among philosophical positions. The point is that there are many shades of philosophic opinion, not just a few, and they often blend into and reflect one another.

Thus, the idea that contemporary philosophy and social science can be characterized as a battle ground on which just two diametrically opposed views are locked in mortal combat is false. It is a fiction invented mostly by those who see themselves in their own imaginations as the nobler of the two protagonists. It is quite true that there is plenty of intellectual ferment in educational administration; one distinguished scholar in the field used the word turmoil.[40] A lot of it stems from the disputes spurred by the claims of subjectivist, phenomenologically-oriented writers and Marxian critical theorists. One might expect that proponents of these two quite different, even antipodal viewpoints would be vigorously contending with one another, but so far that has not happened. The advocates of each of these positions see themselves as combating positivism largely defined in terms of an extreme scientism, a doctrine with virtually no advocates. While those who support these two views have helped to make the intellectual side of educational administration more contentious, more lively, and more interesting, both perspectives have major shortcomings and

neither provides a philosophy that would further advancement in educational administration.

Greenfield has been the leading spokesman in educational administration for subjectivism from the beginning. He has consistently taken a dichotomized view of the world of ideas. He wrote in 1975 of "two fundamentally different ways of looking at the world,"[41] and he began a recent piece on organization theory with this sentence, "Theorists take one of two positions when they speak of organizations."[42] This kind of mentality suggests a lumping together of perspectives that differ from one's own--the tunnel vision of the committed. Together with the antipathy towards the alien lumped perspectives usually present in these circumstances, such a mentality could inhibit advancement in educational administration, if it were a dominant way of thinking.

In more substantive terms, subjectivism has problems with epistemology. Even one of Greenfield's most avid followers writes that "Greenfield's epistemology is an extremely relativistic one . . . ."[43] Such epistemologies verge on solipsism. Their rejection of any sort of general knowledge leaves adherents with a confusing particularism and makes them vulnerable to obscurantisms of various kinds. By removing the public dimension of verification, subjectivism can lead to intuitionism or to a reliance on personal authority. My philosophy teacher, Marvin Farber, was fond of saying, usually with a wry smile, that philosophies of mind often end with a great mind.

Despite the philosophic deficiencies of subjectivism, there has been a positive side to its presentation in educational administration. In its special way, it has reminded us all of the importance of the personal, and of seeing and empathetically understanding others in their terms. It has also provided additional support to those

who have been trying to legitimate and increase the use of various qualitative approaches to research.

The Marxists and neo-Marxist critical theorists share the "them versus us" mentality exhibited by subjectivists like Greenfield. However, it is more institutionalized in the former case. The conception of conflict between the ruling classes and the oppressed classes which is so central to Marxist thought leads naturally to a mentality of dichotomies. Non-Marxist views quickly become those of oppressors, while Marxist ones are defined as emancipatory. Certitude of this kind would hardly promote advancement in a field like educational administration, if it were to become a dominant view.

However, there seems little chance of that. History, in which Marxists put so much faith, has been unkind to them. Some of Marx's predictions turned out to be dead wrong, and capitalist nations have modified their systems to promote social justice, while many Marxist regimes have ended up as blatantly repressive dictatorships. Moreover, in a lot of areas, for instance, in North America, Marxism has attracted mainly a few voluble intellectuals and has been ignored or rejected by the working classes.

The commitment of Marxists to a particular political program has resulted in a kind of intellectual imperialism in which adherents must remain loyal to basic tenets, even when disputing smaller points of doctrine. Such disputes are often cast in terms of who is the truest Marxist.[44] The Marxian doctrine of praxis is not so much a call to examine whether justice is being served in society as it is an injunction to apply a pregiven perspective. Practical reflection is thus devalued and displaced.

The contribution of Marxists and neo-Marxist critical theorists to social research has been limited because they favor ideological over empirical grounding for their work. These writers have very little to say to educational administrators. What they

do have to say is often a prejudgment uninformed by closer observation which labels these administrators as oppressors. The jargon and ponderous writing style of some Marxist scholars makes Talcott Parsons, who is often cited by social scientists as abstruse, seem direct and even Hemingwayesque by comparison. This style increases the distance between the Marxists and educational administrators. There are, nevertheless, some insights to be found in these writings, especially those on power, ideology, and equity. However, such insights can be better attained and expressed when separated from the constraints of the Marxist framework and program, a point that critical theorists have completely failed to understand.

Because they attack a straw man, an obsolete, extremely scientistic positivism, subjectivists and Marxian critical theorists in educational administration both appear to believe that a radical change, or in one of their favorite phrases, a paradigm shift, is occuring that will leave (one of?) them triumphant.[45] Both proclaim crisis and the complete collapse of current modes of thought in educational administration. However, mere proclamation, even loud proclamation, does not make something true. In the present case, we have a clear example of wishful thinking, fed in part at least, by mentalities given to simplistic dichotomies.

I have no desire to defend current thought or the status quo in educational administration. Everybody knows there are substantial weaknesses and limitations, along with some very good work. The issue is how to advance the field. The question in the cases of subjectivism and Marxian critical theory is whether these particular perspectives and the philosophic positions they entail will do so. I do not think that they will.

I have attempted to present a way of confronting these and other viewpoints by setting forth some ideas about what constitutes advancement in educational administration in three crucial areas, and I have taken from these ideas criteria for a

philosophy or philosophic positions that would be appropriate for educational administration. I believe my analysis takes into account the multidimensional and multidisciplinary character of our field that has been explored by Sander.[46]

While a number of philosophical views can contribute to advancement in educational administration as it has been defined here, I have my own preferences which have been presented elsewhere.[47] Not surprisingly, they are quite consistent with the proposed criteria. Others may disagree, but I think educational administration requires a philosophy that is open to a wide range of ideas and methods, that sees inquiry as a human enterprise that is full of weaknesses but is self-corrective, that is skeptical and strives for explication and public verification while attempting to confront varieties of experience in their own terms,[48] and that pursues reflective methods in exploring values and the context of practice.

I began with the question of how philosophy can serve educational administration. My response, which was based on the current situation in our field, was intended as an argument for openness and clarity. Whether or not you are satisfied with this response, the question is a worthwhile one that continues to invite exploration.

NOTES

1. The influence in sociology and social science generally of Talcott Parsons who spun grand theory and Robert K. Merton who argued for middle range theories was especially strong during that time.

2. See Marvin Farber, "The Phenomenological Tendency," Journal of Philosophy 59, August 1962.

3. For example, see John K. Smith, "Quantitative Versus Qualitative Research," Educational Researcher 12, March 1983.

4. Thomas B. Greenfield tilts at this virtually non-existent conception of science almost every time he writes on the subject. See his "The Man Who Comes Back Through the Door in the Wall: Discovering Truth, Discovering Self, Discovering Organizations," Educational Administration Quarterly 16, Fall 1980, and other papers by him cited therein.

5. For a criticism of positivists for not taking a realist position see Maurice Cornforth, "Logical Empiricism," in Philosophy for the Future, Roy Wood Sellars, V. J. McGill and Marvin Farber, eds. (New York: Macmillan, 1949).

6. The term many of them preferred to positivist.

7. Ivan Illich examines the science for people versus science by people issue in his "Hugh of St. Victor or Science by People," Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society 1, 1981, p. 573 ff.

8. I have discussed this in Some "Yes Buts" and Educational Administration (Columbus, OH: UCEA Occasional Paper 83-01, 1983).

9. See my "Ideology and Science in Organization Theory," Educational Administration Quarterly 15, Fall 1979.

10. The notion of falsification is, of course, associated with Karl R. Popper. See his The Logic of Scientific Discovery (New York: Basic Books, 1959).

11. Such standards arise within inquiry. They are not given from on high. See John Dewey, Logic: The Theory of Inquiry (New York: Henry Holt, 1938).

12. Paul Feyerabend, Against Method (London: NLB, 1975).

13. Dewey, Logic.

14. See Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Culture (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

15. Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln, Effective Evaluation (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981); Robert G. Owens, "Methodological Rigor in Naturalistic Inquiry," Educational Administration Quarterly 18, Spring 1982; Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, "Drawing Valid Meaning From Qualitative Data," Educational Researcher 13, May 1984. A similar emphasis can be found in the well known work by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, The

Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (Chicago: Aldine, 1967).

16. Greenfield, "The Man Who Comes Back," p. 53. The criticism is to my "Contemporary Issues in Theory in Educational Administration," Educational Administration Quarterly 16, Fall 1980.

17. "Some Issues in Research on School Organizations," in Problem Finding in Educational Administration, Glenn L. Immegart and William L. Boyd, eds. (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1979).

18. See, for example, my "The Structure of Knowledge and the Theory-Practice Relationship," Educational Theory 13, January 1963; and T. B. Greenfield, "Administration and Systems Analysis," Canadian Administrator 3, April 1964. Daniel E. Griffiths has called for field studies since the 1950s. See his Administrative Theory (New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, 1959), p. 35; Norman J. Boyan completed what was probably the first study of this type in educational administration. See "A Study of the Formal and Informal Organization of a School Faculty." (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1951).

19. As an example see David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson and Geoffrey Maruyama, "Interdependence and Interpersonal Attraction Among Heterogeneous and Homogeneous Individuals: A Theoretical Formulation and a Meta-analysis of the Research," Review of Educational Research 53, Spring 1983.

20. In this connection see Max van Manen, "Invitation to Phenomenology and Pedagogy," and Ton Beekman, "Human Science as a Dialogue with Children," both in Phenomenology and Pedagogy 1, 1983.

21. See, for example, Michael Polanyi's treatment of Personal Knowledge (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

22. For example, in one philosophic debate, a critic of phenomenology, denying he failed to comprehend the view because he was indisposed toward it, stated he was indisposed toward phenomenology because he found it incomprehensible. The debate is mentioned in D. C. Phillips, "Philosophy of Education: In Extremis?" Educational Studies 14, Spring 1983, especially p. 18.

23. "Mystifications and Mysteries in Thought and Research in Educational Administration," Paper presented at a UCEA Conference on Thought and Research in Educational Administration, Rutgers University, April 1983.

24. While T. B. Greenfield's work in educational administration could be called phenomenologically-oriented, it is definitely not philosophical phenomenology, as I have pointed out previously. In any case, he seems to have dropped the term.

25. See Edmund Husserl, Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, W. R. Boyce Gibson, tr. (New York: Macmillan, 1931); Marvin Farber, The Foundation of Phenomenology (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1943); and Marvin Farber, "Modes of Reflection," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 8, June 1948.

26. Their ideas and main works are cited in Don Martindale, The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1960). Farber, among others, questions the authenticity of Scheler's phenomenology. See Farber, "The Phenomenological Tendency."

27. Donald Vanderberg, "Hermeneutical Phenomenology in the Study of Educational Administration," Journal of Educational Administration 20, Winter 1982.

28. Ibid., p. 31.

29. Valerie Polakow Suranski, "Review of The Hermeneutic Imagination by Joseph Bleicher, Phenomenology and Pedagogy 1, 1983, p. 106.

30. Richard Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979). See also the comments on Rorty in Rudiger Bubner, "Hermeneutics: Understanding or Edification?" Philosophical Topics 12, 1981.

31. See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Correspondence 1846-1895, Dona Torr, ed. and tr. (New York: International Publishers, 1936), Marx to Weydemeyer, p. 57.

32. J. Kenneth Benson, "Organizations: A Dialectical View," Administrative Science Quarterly 22, March 1977.

33. For an application to education see Henry Giroux, Critical Theory and Educational Practice (Victoria, Australia: Deakin University, 1983).

34. For example, see Henry Marcuse, Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory (Boston: Beacon, 1960).

35. See my treatment of values in "The Professorship in Educational Administration: A Rationale," in The Professorship in Educational Administration, Donald J. Willower and Jack A. Culbertson, eds. (University Park, PA and Columbus, OH: The Pennsylvania State University, and UCEA, 1964).

36. Willard Waller noted this feature of schools, calling them museums of virtue. See his The Sociology of Teaching (New York: Wiley, 1932): more recently the theme of the schools' societal dependence appears in the work of John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan. See their "The Structure of Educational Organizations," and other chapters in Organizational Environments: Ritual and Rationality, John W. Meyer and W. Richard Scott with the assistance of Brian Rowan and Terrence E. Deal (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983).

37. John Dewey's classic treatment of deliberation appears in Human Nature and Conduct (New York: Modern Library, 1939).

38. Farber, The Foundation of Phenomenology, p. 17.

39. Keith Hoeller, "Phenomenology, Psychology, and Science," Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry 16, 1978-1979, p. 171.

40. Daniel E. Griffiths, "Intellectual Turmoil in Educational Administration," Educational Administration Quarterly 15, Fall 1979.

41. T. B. Greenfield, "Theory About Organization: A New Perspective and Its Implications for Schools," in Administering Education: International Challenge, M. Hughes, ed. (London, Athlone, 1975), p. 74.

42. Thomas B. Greenfield, "Theories of Educational Organization: A Critical Perspective," for International Encyclopedia of Education: Research and Studies, in preparation. I quote from a draft, subject to revision, that was sent to me by the author. See p. 2 of the manuscript.

43. Peter Gronn, Rethinking Educational Administration: T. B. Greenfield and His Critics (Victoria, Australia: Deakin University, 1983), p. 15.

44. See Ben Agger, "Marxism 'or' the Frankfurt School?" Philosophy of the Social Sciences 13, September 1983.

45. See my discussion of the misuse of the term paradigm in "Mystifications and Mysteries."

46. Benno Sander, "Administracao Da Educacao No Brasil E Hora Da Relevancia," Educacao Brasileira 4, 1982.

47. Two of the most recent sources are "Evolution in the Professorship: Past, Philosophy, Future," Educational Administration Quarterly 19, Summer 1983; and "Educational Administration: Some Philosophical and Other Considerations," Journal of Educational Administration 19, Summer 1981.

48. Cultural diversity is also an important dimension here. For a recent treatment of comparative educational administration, see Patrick D. Lynch and Maritza Y. Tason, "Research on Educational Planning: An International Perspective," in Review of Research in Education, Edmund W. Gordon, ed. (Washington: American Educational Research Association, 1984).